USATÎI LARISA

THE PRAXEOLOGY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



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FOREWORD

Intercultural learning is a lifelong learning process and developing it is a big ask. To rise to this challenge, the 21st century teacher needs to draw upon more than a deep knowledge of linguistic and pedagogical theory and practice, fundamentally important though these domains remain. It is important to note that exposure and interaction with people of different cultural affiliations does not imply, let alone guarantee, intercultural learning .

> „Between what I think, what I want to say, what I think I am saying, what I say, what you want to hear, what you hear, what you think you understand, what you want to understand and what you understand there are at least 9 chances that we will not understand each other. But let us try anyway". *B. Weber*

Thus the didactical support „The Praxeology of intercultural communication" is intended for Master students and its purpose is to shape learners into intercultural competent beings:

- *to possess the linguistic knowledge, emotional resources and ethical qualities necessary to mediate otherness, cope with strangeness;*
- *to have excellent results through conscious, planned and facilitated experiential learning;*
- *to make wise judgements in unpredictable situations;*
- *to express personal wishes and opinions and engage in captivating and fruitful conversations.*

The support contains nine themes, supported by activities which include games, roleplays, debates, projects, energizers and simulations that are aimed at triggering reflection among the students, the teachers, etc. The activities have been selected because they support the learning objective to develop the intercultural competence of the participants.

The author hopes that the support will strengthen their existing knowledge, enable the learners to form judgements of their own and

develop a set of different competences, interlinked to each other. We wish you a happy and fruitful learning experience!



1. INTERCULTURAL STUDIES – THEIR HISTORY AND BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

It is a demanding time to be a language educator. The teachers nowadays face a much more complex challenge: to devise language curricula, courses and classes that *shape learners into interculturally competent beings.* An intercultural competent being is someone who possesses much more than evolving knowledge about the vocabulary and grammar of the target language, together with the skills and subskills that are required to communicate in it accurately and fluently. An intercultural competent being possesses the linguistic knowledge, emotional resources and ethical qualities necessary to mediate otherness, cope with strangeness and make wise judgements in unpredictable situations. Developing intercultural communicative competence, or ICC, is, as they now say, a big ask. To rise to this challenge, the 21st century teacher needs to draw upon more than a deep knowledge of linguistic and pedagogical theory and practice, fundamentally important though these domains remain.

Intercultural communicative competence encompasses knowledge, skills and attitudes at the interface between several cultural areas including the students' own values and worldviews and those of a target language country.

Consequently, the development of intercultural communicative competence is seen as a process that involves the students' experiences from their own cultural backgrounds allowing them, at the same time, to reflect on their individual cultural assumptions as an integral part of further development of their skills and knowledge of the world. Intercultural communicative competence is inseparable from language teaching, but linguists and methodologists started to consider it as a major facet of language instruction only recently.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dell Hymes

John Gumperz

Basil Bernstein

Ervin Goffman

Nowadays, the focus is put on those *foreign language teaching methods* which enable learners to become *successful communicators.* Hence, they are expected not only to exchange information, for which they need to master a linguistic code, but also to maintain proper relationships with their interlocutors. The task reveals great cultural richness and complexity due to the multiplicity and abundance of cultural identities of the speakers. We may thus posit that an experience of otherness is a natural component of communication in a foreign language. Its sources are twofold: firstly, learners experience strangeness of their interlocutors and secondly, their contact with unfamiliar others challenges their own understanding of reality and often makes them discover a stranger in themselves.



Although several models of intercultural communicative competence with its respective components have already been created – Milton J. Bennett (1986), Colleen Kelley and Judith Meyers (1999), Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta (2000), Wolfgang Fritz and Antje Moellenberg (2002) and Michael F. Tucker (2004) – its mastering is still a challenge for language teachers and learners alike. The difficulty is *twofold*, because, as already mentioned, on the one hand learners are to possess the language and, on the other, they have to be able to use it in various cultural contexts, in which they interact. The challenge is particularly strongly felt in the countries where the experience of intercultural communication is fairly new. Consequently, *a burning matter* is to investigate the role of extra-linguistic, mainly culture-specific factors, in the process. Special attention should be paid to the role – either of a facilitator or a barrier – of the learners' mother culture. Its positive or negative function as underlying determinants of the learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes, depends on the degree of similarity between the cultures involved in communication. The closer the relationship between the learners' mother culture and the target culture of the speech community whose language they want to study, the less painful and the more successful the foreign language teaching/learning process. *Guo-Ming Chen* and *William J. Starosta*, *Wolfgang Fritz* and *Antje Moellenberg* and *Michael F. Tucker* all identified *intercultural communicative sensitivity* as a *component of intercultural communicative competence.*

The role of the cultural component in developing intercultural communicative competence is unquestionable. It is not without a reason to claim that the extra-linguistic dimensions of intercultural communication encouraged the research in the field and inspired the study of the non-linguistic skills that it is necessary for a competent intercultural communicator to develop.

In global and inter-reliant contacts intercultural communication is a 'must'. It develops dynamically due to more and more frequent and intense relationships among international, multiethnic and plurilingual scholars, students, customers and travellers, to name only a few categories. Globalization is the main factor accounting for the change as the nations whose languages, cultures and worldviews have differed significantly make contact now and become mutually dependent. They tend to co-operate with each other and act as partners in various fields although geographically speaking some of them might remain hundreds of miles away from one another. However, contrary to what one might think, the facility with which they can act as global citizens, does not facilitate to

the same extent their interpersonal relations. Participants in intercultural encounters are challenged by multiplied opportunities for cultural misunderstanding. The way they manage to overcome them is tightly linked with their success or failure in the process of communication. Thus, today more than ever before the biggest difficulty consists in the manner in which they deal with the culture-specific differences they face.

Porter and *Samovar* claim that Intercultural communication is basically understood as an exchange of information between speakers with different cultural identities when "a message producer is a member of one culture and a message receiver is a member of another". Their different cultural backgrounds result in their incongruent experience of communication practices, leading to potential difficulties in understanding each other. More or less serious misunderstandings inherent in communication which apply to both factual and interpersonal levels encourage Jerzy Mikułowski-Pomorski to posit that the main aim of intercultural communicators is to understand others and to be understood by them despite culture-specific differences present in their encounters. Thus, as Michael Byram claims, *successful intercultural communication cannot be judged solely in terms of the efficiency of information exchange but also in terms of the effectiveness of establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.*

Although *intercultural communication has its origins in ancient times,* it definitely produced its own methods, techniques, tools and procedures of investigation only as late as in the 20thcentury. It was after the end of World War II, which changed the world order by introducing a new political geography, when the need to communicate successfully in a multicultural reality was especially strongly felt. Intercultural communication studies are deeply indebted mainly to sociolinguistics and anthropology. *Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, Basil Bernstein, Ervin Goffman* were great contributors to the discipline: they were interested in investigating extra-linguistic factors which determined a different use of language in definite communication situations. Thus, their focus on socio-cultural facets and parameters refined the approach to communication and drew attention to the value of other than linguistic factors for its successful development.

Dell Hymes - the *founding father* of the ethnography of communication emphasized the need to investigate interactions among members of various cultures. The ethnography of speech is a method of discourse analysis in linguistics, which draws on the anthropological field of ethnography. According to Dell Hymes' theory *speakers must be able to discern which communication acts and/or codes are important to a given group of speakers*, what types of meanings they apply to different communication events, and how they learn the codes which provide an insight into particular communities. The communicative value of the insight consists in its ability to enhance communication with group members, to make sense of group members' decisions, and to distinguish groups from each another.

John Gumperz approach known as *Interactional Sociolinguistics* allowed him to analyze variations in discourse within a particular speech community by studying how they affected the unfolding of meaning in interaction. He wanted to find out how they correlate with the social order of the speech and culture community and more exactly how the order of situations and the culture of the

speaker affect the way in which conversational inferences are made. These, in turn, allow for a final interpretation of verbal or non-verbal signals known as contextualization cues.

The impact of culture on communication was also evidenced by the research of *Basil Bernstein* who saw *culture* as the *central value* which accounts for collective interests, identities, expectations and identifications of members in a given community. Hence his distinction between restricted and elaborated codes which reflect the socio-cultural make-up of their users. The value of culture for interpersonal communication was directly claimed by Larry Samovar et al. according to whom proper communication research cannot be conducted without the study of culture. He justified his approach explaining that communication always occurs against a rich socio-cultural background.

An interest in intercultural communication was also fostered by *Geoffrey Leech* whose main academic interest was pragmatics, the study of language in use. He researched the ability of natural language speakers to communicate more than just what is explicitly stated in their utterances by means of linguistic forms of expression. Pragmatics studies the socio-cultural forces in play for a given utterance including power, gender, race, identity, etc. For example, code switching resulting from socio-cultural variables directly relates to pragmatics, since it affects a shift in the pragmatic force of an utterance. Thus pragmatics helps those researching the field of intercultural issues to relate elements of language to broader socio-cultural phenomena.



2. THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PROCESS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The concept of culture requires to be viewed from a number of perspectives since scholars have not yet reached any agreement as to how it should be defined in a multicultural environment. The multiple answers which they have provided can often be found to be contradictory, inconsistent and even confusing as the definitions tend to serve the research purposes of their authors. However, two basic definitions which give lists of individual components of culture can be distinguished. They seem pragmatic and functional because *culture is treated as a tool to solve diverse problems*. In order to reach a consensus as far as numerous complexities and simplicities of the terms are concerned, several attempts to define culture need to be synthesized; since each view, either linguistic, anthropological or social, offers a myriad of insights into it. The difficulty derives from the nature of culture itself. *Culture* is the most important concept in anthropology (the study of all aspects of human life, past and present) where it is commonly used to refer to a group of people who live and think in the same ways. Likewise, any group of people who share a common culture and consequently, common rules of behaviour as well as the same form of social organization constitutes a society.

An attempt to understand culture in a systematic way by means of referring to its value system was successfully undertaken by Clyde Kluckhohn and Florence Strodtbeck in the 1960s. They concluded that each *culture consists of the same set of values but what makes cultures differ from each other is not the values themselves but their hierarchy*. They also postulated that *culture plays a very pragmatic function in each speech and culture community where it serves as a tool for solving problems.*

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The above statement is based on three assumptions. Firstly, there is a limited number of human problems to which all cultures must find solutions. Secondly, the limited number of solutions may be charted along a range of variations, and, thirdly, not all solutions are favoured in each culture group to the same extent, although, potentially they are present in every culture. Consequently, as Henry A. Murray and Clyde Kluckhohn noticed, intercultural communication could be facilitated by analyzing a given *culture-specific orientation* to *five key aspects of human life*, each of which implies specific underlying values:

- *Human Nature* (people seen as intrinsically good, evil, or mixed);
- *Man-Nature Relationship* (humans should be subordinate to nature, dominant over nature, or live in harmony with it);
- *Time* (primary value placed on past/tradition, present/enjoyment, or future/posterity/delayed gratification);
- *Activity* (being, becoming/inner development, or doing/striving/industriousness);
- *Social Relations* mainly defined in terms of the locus of power (hierarchical, collateral/collective

The concept of *culture* as the totality of human life, including both its spiritual and material aspects was also posited by Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin. Moreover, while enumerating the components of culture, they included language among them, which is of some special interest for my analysis. Stempleski and Tomalin defined *culture as patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share.* Culture distinguishes one human group from others. A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems.

As for other scholars who have investigated the issue of culture to offer its clear and comprehensible explanation, Deborah Peck's definition is worth mentioning. Peck seems to have provided the most complete definition where not only all the basic constituents of culture are included but also their character is explained. Her definition puts an emphasis on the pragmatic value of culture, which makes us think about it in terms of progress and civilization. It also assigns to culture a normative function seen in the way it organizes societies.

> *Culture is all the accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of a given people. It is that facet of human life learned by people as a result of belonging to some particular group; it is that part of learned behavior shared with others. Not only does this concept include a group's way of thinking, feeling, and activity, but also internalized patterns for doing certain things in certain ways … not just the doing of them. This concept of culture also includes the manifestation of a group as exhibited in their achievements and contributions to civilization. Culture is our social legacy as contrasted with our organic heredity. It regulates our lives at every turn".* (D. Peck)

A slightly different view was expressed by *H. Douglas Brown* who focused on the relationship between language (its meaning) and culture. He claims that they are intricately interwoven and cannot be separated "without losing the significance of either language or culture". He uses the following arguments to support his thesis about the link between language and culture;

- language acquisition does not follow a universal sequence, but differs across culture;
- the process of becoming a member of a society is realized through exchanges of language in particular social situations;
- every society arranges the ways in which children participate in particular situations, and this, in turn, affects the form, the function and the content of children's utterances;
- caregivers' primary concern is not with grammatical input, but with the transmission of socio-cultural knowledge.

All the definitions under discussion refer, more or less explicitly, to the concept of culture as a set of values and their subsequent norms and patterns of behaviour which members of a given speech community identify with and which account for existing differences among them. They also stress a *strong relationship between culture and language* as well as identity which continually evolves because of the dynamic character of culture. *Culture resembles a living organism that undergoes constant transformations under the influence of external changes and in contact with other cultures.* Referring to enumerative and functional definitions of culture, it appears as a natural habitat for people, which makes it a challenge for interpersonal encounters. Consequently, *culture* has to be included in language teaching because it may both *facilitate and hinder communication*. In its facilitating role, culture reveals to interactors a great variety of potential solutions and approaches to the same problem. As a barrier, cultural diversity results in mutual misunderstandings of speakers who, in order to accept the differences, are challenged intellectually, emotionally and even

somatically. Hence the importance of understanding culture and its role in communication, which in reality equals understanding its role in shaping interpersonal relations. Gudykunst and Kim claim that the biggest challenge for each intercultural communicator is to maintain an *optimal balance* by recognizing and appreciating cultural uniqueness, while at the same time embracing the shared human conditions and characteristics.

As already stated the process of intercultural communication involves a dynamic relationship between its participants and the situation in which the cultural context and a prior experience of culture of interlocutors come into play. Since words and their meanings are linked to their cultural context, language and cultural patterns change over time and vary according to the situation. Michael Byram and Michael Fleming state that *language has no function independent of the situation in which it is used*, always referring to something beyond itself: its cultural context. The statement is of great value for intercultural communication, because it explains potential failures of intercultural speakers who have been brought up in different cultural contexts and who while interacting with each other tend to make a direct transfer of their cultural knowledge and experience.

Cultural dimensions of the context provide sufficient clues to interpret the messages received and to act accordingly to the interlocutor's expectations. It is also the cultural context which accounts for the choice of speech acts, especially the indirect ones, conversational topics, conversational scripts, etc. Essentially, one does not need to be familiar with the other individuals in order to communicate, but one does need to understand their cultural context. **The role of culture in intercultural encounters is ambiguous in the sense that it may either facilitate communication between its participants or hinder it. Its negative impact on communication success is more frequent than the positive one, which makes it often studied by many researchers in order to reduce or even eliminate it.** Jerzy Mikułowski claims that *culture* is one of the *main barriers* in *intercultural communication* and to reduce its harmful influence, first of all similarities instead of differences among interacting cultures should be focused on. Laray M. Barna's idea is different because she finds it essential to deal with culture specific differences which are classified into six types of barriers. She calls them *stumbling blocks* and they are the following:

- *ethnocentrism,*
- *preconceptions and stereotypes,*
- *high anxiety,*
- *assumption of similarities instead of differences,*
- *language and nonverbal misinterpretations*.

According to Barna *ethnocentrism* is an inclination to issue negative opinions concerning other cultures while referring to the standards functioning in a native culture. The tendency to evaluate, approve or disapprove, rather than to try to comprehend thoughts and actions from the worldview of the other is a deterrent to understanding among cultures.

Preconceptions and stereotypes, as the second stumbling block, reduce the threat of the unknown by making the world predictable. On the other hand, as they are over-generalized beliefs that provide a conceptual basis independently of their accuracy and objectivity, they provide us with a simplistic concept of reality, often biased and harmful to the group it describes.

High anxiety results from the unknown and unfamiliar world the speaker is to deal with while interacting with his/her interlocutor who is a cultural stranger. This, in turn, causes a great deal of

stress, which many speakers do not have control over. Feelings of anxiety usually permeate both parties and are most visible by interruptions in the flow of verbal and nonverbal interactions.

Misunderstanding and rejection, which result from the next barrier – *assumption of similarities instead of differences* – occur when people are lured into thinking that communication should be possible due to the fact that they share the same human needs, although they are of completely different backgrounds. Unfortunately, they overlook the fact that the forms of adaptation to the common needs are culture-specific and thus vastly incompatible.

The fifth stumbling block concerns the *use of language, both verbal and nonverbal*, by interlocutors and their fluency in it. The difficulties may be caused by vocabulary (slang, dialect), syntax and paralangue (intonation, tone of voice, loudness, etc). Communication is successful only if the command of language by both speakers allows them to decode the messages received with minimal or no distortion.

Finally, the misinterpretation of nonverbal language such as gestures, postures, proxemics and body movements contributes to communication failures.

To avoid the six stumbling blocks, William B. Gudykunst and Young Y. Kim focus their attention upon the act of communication, bringing it to the individual level. They analyze the ways in which cultural, socio-cultural, and psychocultural influences affect the intercultural communication process. Research at this level provides us with a means of integrating various contributions made to the field of intercultural communication by other disciplines for a better understanding of the work of culture. Its role is defined by the patterns of the native culture of each interlocutor instilled in him/her in the process of socialization which are filtered through his/her individual values, assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions. Thus what each communicator brings to the intercultural encounter is partially public and shared with other members of their cultural group as well as private and personal. As a result, no person represents a whole culture, and cultural patterns are not shared by all members of a cultural group in exactly the same way, which accounts for intercultural as well as intracultural differences and enhances the threat of miscommunication. Anna Lubecka observing the impact of culture on communication in intercultural encounters as evidenced by the findings of many researchers posits that culture mainly influences its three areas:

- the use of language, both verbal and non-verbal,
- the choice and realization of particular speech acts, especially of the so-called conversational routines,
- the classification of conversational topics into taboos and non-taboos.

As previously discussed, *culture determines meanings and their social valence*. The same word may have identical, partially similar or exclusive meanings in two language and culture communities. The most troublesome are the lexical items whose semantic fields differ to some extent but are not mutually exclusive. They cause a lot of misunderstandings and are rightly called *false friends*. The same interpretational difficulties appear on the level of syntax, e.g. a very well-defined order of English sentences with a definite place for subject, verb and object and a rather loose order of Romanian sentences which create meanings. Moreover, emotional intensity or its lack, degree of expressivity, reverence, authority, friendliness, empathy, distance communicated by speakers reflect their cultural identity, socio-cultural needs and patterns of relationship to others.

Anna Lubecka rightly highlights the fact that the same, often troublesome, culture specific differences concern the use of the non-verbal language classified into the following categories:

- ✓ ***eye contact,***
- ✓ ***facial expression,***
- ✓ ***body posture,***
- ✓ ***gestures,***
- ✓ ***haptics,***
- ✓ ***proxemics,***
- ✓ ***chronometrics,***
- ✓ ***olphatics.***

Non-verbal means of communication, although learnt, are largely subconscious. As such they are also less strictly monitored by speakers than the verbal ones, which may more often lead to miscommunication and false assumptions. To communicate proficiently interactors have to be aware of the culturally determined patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication where smaller units get combined into longer stretches of text.

In a similar course of reasoning John L. Austin put forward the theory of speech acts understood as basic communication units revealing a strong dependence on culture to be manifested in two different ways. Firstly, it is seen in a number of their constitutive moves and their lexico-syntactic features. Secondly, it can be observed in the attribution of meaning to indirect speech acts which are much more context bound than the direct speech acts. Particular speech and culture communities show substantial differences in this respect as evidenced in the research of Anna Wierzbicka on speech acts from English, Italian, Polish, German, Jewish, as well as Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk's analysis of British-English and Polish; Anna Lubecka's investigation of American-English, French and Polish; Shoshana Blum-Kulka and her associates' examination of American-English and Jewish; and Anna Trosborg's research into English and Dutch. The differences are especially conspicuous when the so-called conversational routines are studied, that is those speech acts which belong to the sociolect and where an idiolectal use of language is hardly to be seen, e.g. greetings, apologies, requests, wishes, etc.

Traditionally realized greetings in English, especially American-English and Romanian illustrate the many differences quite well. A simple answer given by Americans to the question "How are you?" reveals their optimism, belief in the value of success, empowerment and conviction that "where the will is, the means is". In contrast, Romanian respondents keep grumbling and complaining about literally anything, which can be attributed to the lack of self-confidence, modesty and a strong need for an emotional rapport based on compassion and a special kind of solidarity which they feel in distress.

Finally, the choice of conversational topics mirrors culture-specific values of a given community, especially the cultural concept of taboo. Some ideas are socially disapproved, forbidden and banned from the public discourse for many different reasons, e.g. fear, respect for privacy, politeness, well-being, etc. Money cannot be directly approached in discussions with Americans who claim that only God and the tax office know how much they earn but it was (and still tends to be)

natural for Romanian. Questions about marital status are treated as perfectly polite in South American and Latino cultures, while most Europeans and North Americans find them intrusive and disrespectful of their privacy. Thus, when crossing cultures, the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of appropriateness of topics is vital for creating and then maintaining interpersonal relationships and critical for achieving success.



3. MODELS OF CULTURES

Edward T. Hall offers another effective means of examining cultural similarities and differences in both perception and communication. He categorizes cultures as being either *high* or *low-context*, depending on the degree to which meaning comes from the settings or from the words being exchanged. The assumption underlying Hall's classifications is that one of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective screen between man and the outside world. In its many forms, culture therefore designates what we pay attention to and what we ignore. The study of high-context and low-context cultures therefore offers some insight into what people regard as important and what they disregard.

The word context, as it is used by T. Hall, needs to be understood in terms of its relation to communication. It is defined as the information surrounding an event and it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of the event. A *high-context communication* or message is one whose most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicitly transmitted part of the message. On the other hand, a *low-context communication* is just the opposite, i.e. the mass of information is vested in the explicit code. In high-context cultures (e.g. Native Americans, Latin Americans, Japanese, Chinese and Korean), people are very homogeneous with regard to experiences and information networks. Such cultures, because of tradition and history, change very little over time. These are cultures in which consistent messages have produced consistent responses to the environment. Meaning is not necessarily contained in words. Information may be provided through gestures, the use of space, and even silence.

In low-context cultures (e.g. German, Swiss and American), the population is less homogeneous and therefore tends to compartmentalize interpersonal contacts. The verbal message contains most of the information and very little is embedded in the context or the participants. This is manifested on a number of occasions, i.e. the Asian mode of communication is often indirect and implicit, whereas Western communication tends to be direct and explicit. Westerners are more prone to making very explicit statements and have little capability with nonverbal forms of expression. High-context cultures tend to be more aware of their surroundings and the environment and do not rely on verbal communication as their main information channel. In addition to the differences in nonverbal communication, there are other manifestations of high-context and low-context cultures that influence communication. Usually members of low-context cultures expect messages to be detailed and definite.

If the message is not clear, or if the point being made is not apparent, members of these cultures will ask very blunt questions. Contrastively, high-context people are apt to become impatient and

irritated when low-context people insist on giving them information they do not require. Another problem is that people in high-context cultures perceive low-context representatives, who rely primarily on verbal messages for information, as less credible. They believe that silence often sends a better message than words, and anyone who needs words does not have the information.

Edward T. Hall's second concept, *polychronic* versus *monochronic* time orientation, deals with the ways in which cultures structure their time. Similar to the high/low context concept, this concept is easy to understand, but it lacks empirical data. The monochronic time concept follows the notion of 'one thing at a time', while the polychronic concept focuses on multiple tasks being handled at one time, and time is subordinate to interpersonal relations.

To *monochromic cultures*, time is a precious commodity that can be lost, saved, or wasted. Cultures, which embrace a monochronic time orientation, view schedules and punctuality as an indispensable part of their workday. Most monochronic time-oriented cultures are Western-based cultures, such as the United States and Germany. On the contrary, *polychromic cultures* prefer to multi-task, or work on different activities at the same time. They do not work on schedule, and in fact, will work while socializing in order to sustain relationships (e.g. Latin America).

Table 1. An overview of the two different time concepts, and their resultant behavior (E. T. Hall)

	MONOCHRONIC CULTURE	POLYCHRONIC
INTERPERSONAL RELATION	Interpersonal relations are subordinate to present schedule	Present schedule is subordinate to interpersonal relations
ACTIVITY COORDINATION	Schedule co-ordinates activity; appointment time is rigid.	Interpersonal relations co-ordinate activity; appointment time is flexible
TIME HANDLING	One task at a time.	Many tasks are handled simultaneously
BREAKS AND PERSONAL TIME	Breaks and personal time are sacrosanct regardless of personal ties.	Breaks and personal time are subordinate to personal ties.
TEMPORAL STRUCTURE	Time is inflexible; time is tangible	Time is flexible; time is fluid
WORK/PERSONAL TIME SEPARABILITY	Work time is clearly separable from personal time	Work time is not clearly separable from personal time
ORGANISATIONAL PERCEPTION	Activities are isolated from organization as a whole; tasks are measured by output in time (activity per hour or minute)	Activities are integrated into organization as a whole; tasks are measured as part of overall organizational



4. LANGUAGE AS A BASIC MEANS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

One of the most outstanding scientists *Noam Chomsky* whose role in understanding the nature and the work of language cannot be denied, claims that a language should be viewed as a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. According to the definition each language has a finite number of sounds, and each sentence can be represented as their finite sequence. Noam Chomsky's definition illustrates the contrast with the others, both in style and in content. It neither emphasizes the communicative function nor mentions the symbolic nature of the elements or sequences because its purpose is to focus upon the purely structural properties of languages. The approach reflects the state-of-the-art dimension in the field and for the time when it was created it was a significant achievement.

It is noteworthy that a new concept of language emerged with sociolinguists and interculturalists who studied an active use of language in communication. Thus they claim that language cannot be separated from the context of communication which, in turn, is mainly created by the culture of its speakers. Patrick Moran maintains that anyone immersed in culture sees and hears the language all around in its verbal and non-verbal forms. Thanks to a consistent effort of intercultural communication specialists the concept of language has been enlarged and non-verbal repertoires, which include the use of senses, facial expressions, body movement (kinesics), gestures, space and other means of physical contact, have been incorporated within its notion. Thus, the new perspective on language makes it embrace all kinds of behaviours, including the verbal ones. Whatever we do constitutes a certain code and a message we keep sending, often subconsciously without intending to do so.

Consequently, an intentional use of language is not a necessary prerequisite for communication. At this point it should be stressed that the latest definitions of language focus on its relation to context, especially created by culture, and on the impact of the latter on its meaning, use and communicative success.

According to Louise Damen *language* may be viewed as a system of meanings, a vehicle for cultural transmission, a formative force whose structures place their stamp upon the minds and actions of its speakers, or as only one of many modes of communication.

The relation between *language and culture is twofold*. Language embodies the products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons all of which are marked by culture. At the same time, it is a product of culture, both similar to other culture-specific products and unique.

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LANGUAGE, THEREFORE, *IS A WINDOW TO CULTURE*.

To practise culture, we need a language. We need to be able to express ourselves and to communicate with members of the culture as we engage with them in a myriad practices and products that constitute their way of life. Additionally, we need to do it appropriately, using the right language in the right way, according to the expectations of the members of the culture. This is the language of self-expression, communication, and social interaction. It is based on a direct cultural experience. Thus, to conclude, a complete understanding of culture requires an examination of language and language cannot be fully appreciated and successfully used in interpersonal communication unless it is filtered through culture.



5. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AS A FORERUNNER OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Referring to the basic principles of Dell Hymes' theory, communicative competence is contingent upon the context in which the interaction takes place. Consequently, a communicator who is successful with one group in one situation may not be perceived as competent with a different group in another situation. The emphasis on communication skills can be viewed as both "*a blessing and a curse"* because while few communication professionals would argue with the claim that acquiring basic communication skills is necessary for our effective social participation, when we are confronted with the prospect of operationalizing the concern, most often we are left to our own devices.

A gradual shift towards a more behavioural orientation of communicative competence was seen in the 1980s when the study of communicative effectiveness was related to such elements as acceptance, self-disclosure, involvement and empathy, e.g. the definitions by Carl Larson, Philip M. Backlund, Mark Redmond and Alton Barbour. For all of them communicative competence is the ability of an individual to demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate communicative behavior in a given situation. The key to the definition is their understanding of communication as a series of communicative behaviours properly demonstrated by interlocutors. They distinguish at least their two types: the first one embraces behaviours actually performed in a given situation and the second one refers to the ability to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviours performed by others in a communication act.

The interactional nature of communicative competence has also been stressed by Brian H. Spitzberg who offers this very short but vague and general definition, referring to it as the ability to interact well with others. His attempt at making it more precise by explaining that the term "well" refers to *accuracy, clarity, comprehensibility, coherence, expertise, effectiveness and appropriateness* is not very helpful because he does not clarify how to understand each of the notions. In Gustav Friedrich's approach, communicative competence is measured by the speaker's success in having his/her goals met, which in turn depends on his/her ability to have them realistically set by drawing

on his/her self-knowledge and the knowledge of the world, as well as by maximizing the achievement of 'shared meaning'. Thus, for Friedrich communicative competence is best understood as a situational ability to set realistic and appropriate goals and to maximize their achievement by using knowledge of self, other, context, and communication theory to generate adaptive communication performances.

John Wiemann's definition is functional as he puts stress on interactors' ability to choose from available communicative behaviours the ones which will allow them to have their interpersonal goals met during an encounter. Thus, John Wiemann expects interlocutors not only to possess the proper knowledge of communication behaviours but also to be competent, that is to know which behaviours should be performed in a given communication situation. Their competence is judged on the basis of the accomplishment of their goals, which leads to the conclusion that a speaker's competence is evaluated by the success of his/her performance.

A very pragmatic and functional definition of competence has been also offered by M. R. Parks it is the degree to which individuals perceive they have satisfied their goals in a given social situation without jeopardizing their ability or opportunity to pursue their other subjectively more important goals. Three interdependent themes of *competence – control, responsibility and foresight* – should help to achieve it. We should not only '*know'* and *'know how*,' we must also *'do'* and *'know that we did*'. Parks' combination of cognitive and behavioural perspectives is consistent with John Wiemann and Philip Backlund's argument that communicative competence is the ability of an interactor to choose from among available communicative behaviors in order to successfully accomplish his own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his fellow interactors within the constraints of the situation.

A useful framework for understanding communicative competence was designed by Brian H. It is known as the component model of competence which comprises three specific dimensions: motivation (an individual's approach or avoidance orientation in various social situations), knowledge (plans of action; knowledge of how to act; procedural knowledge), and skill (behaviours actually performed).The component model asserts that communicative competence is mutually defined by the interdependency of the cognitive component (concerned with knowledge and understanding), the behavioural component (concerned with behavioural skills) and the affective component (concerned with attitudes and feelings about the knowledge and behaviours). All of them should be simultaneously performed by interactors in an interpersonal encounter within a specific context.

A more elaborate component model has been proposed by Joan Rubin for whom communicative competence is an impression formed about the appropriateness of another person's communicative behavior one goal of the communication scholar is to understand how impressions about communicative competence are formed, and to determine how knowledge, skill and motivation lead to perceptions of competence within various contexts. When applying the component model to organizational communication contexts, Joan Rubin divides motivation into two separate (though related) components:

- *sensitivity* (the ability to show concern and respect for others)
- *commitment* (the desire to avoid previous mistakes and to find better ways of communicating through the process of self-monitoring).

Consequently, this revised model applied to interpersonal communication embraces knowledge, skills, sensitivity and commitment. It is used by J. Dan Rothwell (2009) to study communicative competence in small-group interactions. Daniel Canary and Michael Cody presented more specific definitions and provided six main criteria for its assessment:

- *adaptability*
- *conversational involvement*
- *conversational management*
- *empathy,*
- *effectiveness*
- *appropriateness.*

ADAPTABILITY is the ability of interlocutors to assess situations and when necessary change behaviours and goals to meet the needs of interaction. It shows their awareness of the other person's perspectives, interests, goals, and communication approach as well as their willingness to modify their own behaviors and goals to adapt to the interaction situation. By mindfully tracking what is happening in the situation, both parties may modify their non-verbal and verbal behaviour to achieve a more synchronized communication process. By modifying their behavioural styles, their polarized views on the problem may also be depolarized or softened. Adaptability consists of six factors:

- Social experience – participation in various social interactions
- Social composure – refers to keeping calm through accurate perception
- Social confirmation – refers to the acknowledgment of a partner's goals
- Appropriate disclosure – being sensitive to the amount and type of information
- Articulation – the ability to express ideas through language
- Wit – the ability to use humour in adapting to social situations, or to ease tensions.

➢ *CONVERSATIONAL INVOLVEMENT* determines the degree to which individuals participate in a conversation with others. Specifically, it concerns the message receivers who tend to differ in terms of their attentiveness and perceptiveness, which influences their reception of information from senders.

- *Perceptiveness* stands for the ability to assign appropriate meanings to others' behaviour as well as the ability to understand what meanings others have assigned to their own behaviour.
- *Attentiveness* is cognizance of another person's communicative behaviour.
- *Responsiveness* is a tendency to react mentally in a given situation and to adapt to it by knowing when and what to say. Highly involved persons are predicted to be more issue-oriented

and attentive to the underlying message in the conversation. On the other hand, less involved persons are expected to focus on events or surface of the conversation.

➢ *CONVERSATIONAL MANAGEMENT* is essentially the way the communicators regulate their interactions. It is a matter of knowing the rules of interpersonal communication exchanges and following them. Communication rules are just like other socially conditioned behaviours and are acquired in the same way. John Wiemann mentions five of them which he finds crucial for a communication success:

- one cannot interrupt the speaker,
- only one person may talk at a time,
- speakers' turns must alternate or interchange,
- frequent or long pauses are inappropriate,
- both parties should be assured that the other is devoting his/her undivided attention.

➢ *EMPATHY* is considered a fundamental dimension of interpersonal and communicative competence when used in its broadest sense. It is the ability to demonstrate understanding and sharing reactions of the interlocutor as well as the ability to understand his/her unique experiences from his/her own perspective. It performs the following functions:

- it connects people with one another on a meaningful and fulfilling level,
- It demonstrates a person's caring attitude towards others,
- it helps understand the people better,
- it usually leads a conversation towards emotional issues,
- it lets one build a personal rapport with others,
- it helps reduce one's irritation with the others' attitude or behaviour,
- it helps reduce one's prejudice or negative assumptions about the others,
- it fosters more meaningful, more helpful and closer friendships.

➢ *EFFECTIVENESS* refers to the degree to which communicators achieve mutually shared meaning and integrative goal-related outcomes. Effective encoding and decoding processes lead to mutually shared meanings, which in turn result in perceived understanding. Interaction effectiveness has been achieved when multiple meanings are attended to with accuracy and when mutually desired interaction goals have been reached. Interaction ineffectiveness occurs when content or relational meanings are mismatched and noises and clashes jam the communication channels. Communication effectiveness can improve task productivity.

➢ *APPROPRIATENESS* constitutes a fundamental criterion for determining communicative competence. It is the ability to uphold the speakers' expectations in a given situation. Individuals typically use their own expectations and scripts to approach an interaction scene. They also formulate their impressions of a competent communicator on the basis of their perceptions of the other's verbal and nonverbal behaviours in a particular interaction setting. To understand whether appropriate communication has been perceived, it is vital to obtain competence evaluations from the standpoint of both communicators and interested observers. It is also critical to obtain both self-perception and other perception data. Appropriate communication behaviours can be evaluated

through understanding the underlying values, norms, social roles, expectations and scripts that govern the interaction episode.

The discussion concerning specific interpersonal skills basic for communicative competence was completed with the research findings of W.M. Rivers. She identified seven types of communicative behaviours which are the following :

- *Listen more carefully and responsively*. An active listening followed with an acknowledgement and a brief restatement should always precede an answer even if the listener does not agree with his/her interlocutor. It is especially useful in tense situations as it communicates interest, respect and a dialogistic attitude to the speaker. It should be stressed that acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings does not mean the listener's approval or agreement with the speaker.
- *Explain your conversational intent and invite consent*. Communicative success depends on the conversation partners' cooperation, which becomes easier and more effective when they know the conversation intent. Its explanation reduces possible misunderstandings and allows the interlocutor to play better his/her communicative role. It is especially important when the interaction is long, complex and emotion-laden. Hence many successful communicators preface their conversations with a clear explanation of their intent.
- *Express yourself more clearly and completely*. The listener should give as much information as required to be able to identify mentally and emotionally with the speaker, which will positively increase his/her co-operation. The information received allows him/her to reconstruct the speaker's experience, to understand it and finally to act empathically, which is especially important while trying to solve a problem. Expressing yourself carefully might appear to take longer than a usual quick style of communication but it is an efficient communicative strategy.
- *Translate your (and other people's) complaints and criticisms into specific requests, and explain them*. The interlocutor's co-operation is more effective when the speaker clearly explains his/her goals by means of using specific, action-oriented and positive language rather
- than generalizations. Similarly, criticism and complaints from others should be translated and restated as requests for action.
- *Ask questions more open-endedly and more creatively*. Unlike yes/no questions which neither open the conversation up nor encourage the interlocutor to share his/her thoughts, feelings, wants and plans, open-ended questions allow for a rather wide range of responses. Thus they provide the listener with information which facilitates the flow of conversation and may have a positive impact on the achievement of his/her goals.
- *Express more appreciation*. Appreciation, delight, affirmation, encouragement and gratitude help to build satisfying relationships, self-confidence, healthy and strong relationships, all of which make it easier to satisfy the needs of interactors.
- *Make better communication an important part of your everyday life*. Considering the role of successful communication in facilitating the speaker's achievement of various goals, its skills should be practised in everyday life, especially in solving problems, giving emotional support to people and sharing with others a positive influence in your world. Each conversation should be seen

as an opportunity to grow in skill and awareness, each encounter as an opportunity to express more appreciation, each argument as an opportunity to translate complaints into requests, and so on.



6. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND ITS COMPONENTS

Intercultural communicative competence has been the focus of a number of studies since 1960s when the term was introduced by researchers interested in overseas technical assistants and by Peace Corps volunteers. It has become of interest for studies with such diverse conceptual themes as immigrant acculturation, culture shock, cross-cultural training, social change, international management, and advising foreign students. Consequently, it has been referred to by means of alternative names such as cross-cultural adjustment, intercultural adaptation, intercultural understanding, overseas success, personal growth/adjustment, cross-cultural effectiveness, and satisfaction with overseas experience. In the last two decades, however, there has been a growing consensus on how to define it. Finally, it has been agreed that intercultural communicative competence involves knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures.

Consequently, intercultural communicative competence entails the use of language that is proper in a given cultural context, and of actions that meet the expectations and demands of intercultural communicators who act in a culture-specific situation. As a result, effective intercultural interactors must recognize constraints imposed on their behaviour by different sets of rules, avoid violating them with improper (e.g., impolite, abrasive, or bizarre) behaviours and enact communication behaviours in a proper (e.g., clear, truthful, considerate, responsive) manner. Effectiveness and appropriateness combine to influence the quality of the interaction. They are also used as the two criteria evaluating communication success. Brian H. Spitzberg suggested four possible communication styles in an intercultural exchange that may result from their combination:

- Minimizing communication is described as both inappropriate and ineffective, and would obviously be of a low communicative quality;
- Sufficing communication is appropriate but ineffective, because although it is highly accommodating, it accomplishes no personal objectives (Spitzberg claims that the sufficing style is sufficient to meet the basic demands of the context but does not contribute in any other way to increase its effectiveness);
- Maximizing communication is effective because the speaker can achieve his/her personal goals, but at the cost of being highly inappropriate contextually; the style may include verbal aggression, deception, infringement of others' rights, or their degradation;
- Optimizing communication is effective in the sense that it allows the interactors to achieve simultaneously their personal goals and to fulfill the normative expectations of the context.

When communicators interact on an intercultural level, they are co-orienting and co-ordinating their behaviours(verbal and nonverbal) to accomplish social functions, meet personal

goals, and conform to the normative dimensions of the situation. Only then, can they be considered competent.

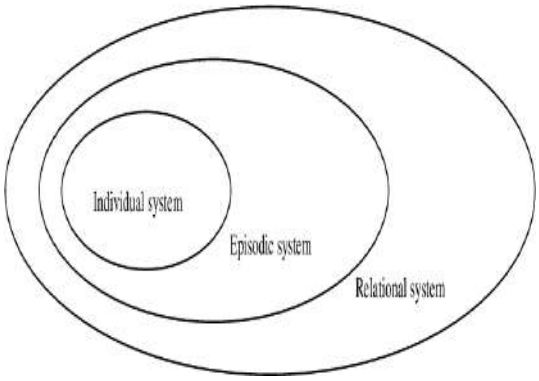
Researchers have shown a considerable variation in identifying basic Communicative components of intercultural communicative competence.

In an early study, Brent D. Ruben identified seven of them which function as general dimensions of communication behaviours related to one's effectiveness on an overseas assignment:

- *display of respect,*
- *interaction posture,*
- *orientation to knowledge,*
- *empathy,*
- *role behaviour,*
- *interaction management,*
- *tolerance of ambiguity.*

Effectiveness and appropriateness related to the relational and episodic context was examined by Brian H. Spitzberg. His research suggests a model of intercultural communicative competence as an impression that behaviour is appropriate and effective in a given context. Thus, the two standards, of appropriateness and of effectiveness, are goals for a competent intercultural communicator. Within the model, three subsystems are operative:

- *the individual subsystem,*
- *the episodic subsystem*
- *the relational subsystem.*



The first, individual subsystem comprises the communicators' characteristics, traits, skills, and predispositions. The second subsystem includes such features of an individual communicator which facilitate his/her competent interaction in a specific episode of the interaction. Finally, the third subsystem refers to the aspects of competence that affect the span of relationships rather than just a particular episode. The subsystems are hierarchical, the individual subsystem is subsumed by the episodic subsystem, which in turn is subsumed by the relational subsystem. The components of knowledge, motivation, and skills have an impact on each of the three subsystems in Spitzberg's model and account for the speaker's communicative competence. Spitzberg emphasized that one subsystem is insufficient to master intercultural communicative competence. Moreover, both interactors must evaluate their competence as effective because when their self-perceptions and mutual perceptions differ, there is small chance for a competent.

Finally, according to Stella Ting-Toomey *communication competence* is a matter of *successfully negotiating mutually acceptable identities during the process of interaction*. Competent intercultural communicators must be able to reconcile three dialectical tensions:

- supporting their own face and the other's face,
- supporting competence face (e.g., ingratiation, empowerment) or autonomy face (e.g., respecting the other's privacy, independence),
- confirming the other's separate cultural identity (heightening cultural differences) or negotiating a mutually defined cultural identity (minimizing separate cultural differences).

Communicators are perceived as interculturally competent to the extent that they effectively and appropriately negotiate the three identities. It should be also noted that face-work, and dialectical orientations are never static, they are constantly in flux and must continually be renegotiated if the relationship is to stay healthy.

Secondly, *intercultural sensitivity* has been assigned the role of the essential non-verbal component and skill determining a proper development of other communication skills. Milton J. Bennett considers intercultural sensitivity as the main variable accounting for success in intercultural communication. He understands it as the ability to be aware of other cultures and to accept the differences resulting from them. Based on his observations that if individuals are taught how to confront cultural differences by becoming more sophisticated and sensitive to them, they may predict at least some of them and diminish their misunderstandings and failures. Also, for Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta intercultural sensitivity is a basic dimension of intercultural communicative competence. It is an ability to understand similarities and differences of other cultures, which embraces people's emotional desire to acknowledge, appreciate, and accept cultural differences, their multiple perspectives on an event or behaviour, their recognition of their own cultural values and those of others as well as their empathy and ability to adjust to different ways of communicating (Chen and Starosta. Based on the conducted observations Milton J. Bennett assigned intercultural sensitivity the crucial role in determining an intercultural speaker's level of intercultural communicative competence. During his studies it appeared that learners confronted cultural difference in some predictable ways as they acquired more intercultural competence.



7. DEVELOPING ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Success in intercultural communication involves knowing what skills are required and then becoming proficient in using them. Such proficiency demands a great deal of practice. William B. Gudykunst claims that skills are our abilities to engage in the behaviours necessary to communicate appropriately and effectively. Speakers' understanding of skills that facilitate communication processes among culturally diverse communicators must lead to their enforcement and active use on a regular basis. Skills are also tied to motivational factors in intercultural communication. The more skilful a speaker becomes, the more successful s/he will be in intercultural communication, thereby increasing the motivation to enter into further exchanges. The intercultural communication skills

discussed below include being *mindful, managing anxiety, empathizing, adapting one's behaviour, and making predictions about and explaining others' behaviours.*

They are larger superimposed concepts which include smaller, more specific sub-skills which function as their sub-components. Being mindful, for example implies, among others, such sub-skills as *self-cognition, self-awareness, being non-judgmental, intercultural tolerance, disclosure, flexibility, respect and self-respect, curiosity about other cultures, e*tc.

Being mindful shows true commitment to the process of exploring cultural differences that have an impact on intercultural communication. It is vital to be able to interpret strangers' behaviours and their underlying different value systems from an ethnocentric perspective. Thus, mindfulness is a necessary prerequisite for tolerance.

Tolerance of ambiguity is challenged anytime individuals engage in intercultural communication. It means that even if they do not have complete information, or if it seems vague or conflicting, they do not abandon their communicative attempts (Brislin, 1993). Instead, they try not to externalise their emotional reactions and wait until objective information can be gained. According to William B. Gudykunst objective information is necessary to understand strangers and accurately predict their behaviour. The skill of tolerating ambiguity can be honed by suspending judgement of others' behaviours, gathering objective information, trying to see the perspectives of others and detaching oneself from emotional involvement so as not to take interactions personally. interactions personally. A speaker committed to tolerating ambiguity will put aside his/her discomfort when the interaction becomes ambiguous and even uncomfortable and will continue his/her attempts to communicate.

Managing *anxiety* is essential if individuals are to communicate effectively with others. Anxiety is an emotional response triggered by the fear that an event may have a negative impact on the speaker. Knowing how anxiety affects us is the first step in developing skills to reduce and manage it. According to Richard Brislin and Tomoko

Yoshida people have *three options* for coping with *anxiety and the stress* it causes. They can change either the stressful situation or their attitude about the situation, or else they can accommodate to the stress. In many cases it is possible to change the situation. The second option is more difficult as it involves changing the interlocutors' thinking and feeling about the stressful situation by not evaluating it as such. The third option, accommodating to stress, is usually the most realistic one. Finding adaptive mechanisms which are tools that help individuals cope with stress without distorting their perspectives is extremely important (Brislin and Yoshida, 1994: 75). Learning the skills needed for intercultural communication will enable communicators to handle the stress involved and thereby minimize the frequency of stressful encounters. Consequently, their success will increase their motivation to engage in intercultural communication interactions.

Empathizing with another person means being able to understand his/her thoughts, feelings, and behaviours from his/her point of view. Empathy is an imaginative, intellectual and emotional participation in another person's experience. Speakers can develop it by practising seeing the world and others from their point of view. One way of achieving empathy is by means of exploring cultural

differences and identifying similarities in the interlocutor's motivation and behaviour, which allows the communicator to learn their cultural relativity. Seeking out objective information helps keep negative stereotypes at bay and increases empathy. Adapting the communicator's behaviour to a given communicative situation consists in selecting the best means of gathering information about others, being flexible with instructional strategies, and before passing judgement trying to understand others' interactions and behaviours as a possible result of cultural differences.

Speakers can adapt their behaviour by incorporating into their own repertoires the strategies of their interlocutors'. They can also become mindful of their own limitations in intercultural communication and of the need to call for help when they themselves fail. Some intercultural communicative situations are especially difficult to manage because of the differences in values across cultures. Then it should be natural to ask for assistance from the people who have a better understanding of a particular culture as they can offer needed information, refer their interlocutors to other sources of information, and act as intermediaries. Making accurate predictions about another's behaviours as well as explaining them consists in attributing certain characteristics to its performer or to the whole group s/he belongs to so as to make them meaningful for the communicator. As meanings tend to be assigned by means of assumptions, stereotypes or previous experience of an individual or his/her group of reference, cognitive processes often get simplified. On the other hand, their simplification assists the interlocutor's comprehension of another speaker and of the situation, which allows him to be more self-confident, self-possessed and effective in his/her communicative behaviours. On the other hand, in many situations assumptions and stereotypes do not provide sufficient information. Each communicator should try to gather as much objective information as possible to avoid erroneous interpretations of his/her interlocutor's behaviours. William B. Proper conditions constitute another category of factors contributing to a speaker's becoming consciously and consistently competent in intercultural interactions. Brian Spitzberg and William Cupach (1984) isolated three such conditions: knowledge, motivation, and skills. The likelihood to act as a competent intercultural communicator significantly diminishes when any of them is either absent or poorly performed.

Knowledge refers to the speaker's awareness or understanding of requisite information and actions at the cross of cultures. A knowledgeable communicator possesses information about the people, the communication rules, the context, and the normative expectations governing the interaction with the interlocutors from another culture.

Without it, s/he will invariably make misattributions, choose incorrect communication strategies, violate rules of etiquette, or cause the loss of face for self or other. Furthermore, s/he may not be able to correctly ascribe the reasons for erroneous behaviours in communication and remedy them. To obtain the needed knowledge, speakers need to be not only sensitive to their interlocutors' feedback but also cognitively flexible to accommodate that feedback. Thus, the knowledge component of intercultural communicative competence entails both the body of information necessary to interact appropriately and effectively as well as the cognitive schemata or orientations to facilitate the acquisition of such information. In terms of the necessary information, researchers have found a positive correlation between intercultural communicative competence and awareness of the other culture. They increase the intercultural communicator's understanding of others and of self, which,

in turn, facilitates his/her making accurate predictions and attributions. Favourable cognitive orientations have been found in terms of open-mindedness, being non-judgmental, self-monitoring ability, problem-solving ability and cognitive complexity. All of them facilitate perspective-taking and adaptation to new information.

- *Motivation* refers to the set of feelings, intentions, needs and drives associated with the anticipation of or an actual engagement in intercultural communication. Factors such as anxiety, perceived social distance, attraction, ethnocentrism, and prejudice can influence a decision to communicate with another. If fear, dislikes and anxieties predominate in communicators' affect towards others, they will have negative motivation, which will probably make them avoid the interaction, even if they feel that they have the requisite knowledge and skills. However, if confidence, interest, likes, and good intentions predominate in their affect towards others, this will result in their positive motivation, and they will seek out and engage in interaction with others.

Thus, competent intercultural communicators must learn to reduce the negative influences and increase the positive influences on their motivation to communicate with members of different cultures. In terms of the motivation component of competence, a number of variables have The final skill component of intercultural communicative competence reflects the behaviours necessary to interact appropriately and effectively with members of different cultures. Researchers have discovered several behaviours that are positively correlated with intercultural communicative competence. They are: *mindfulness, intercultural adroitness, interaction involvement, recognition of non-verbal messages, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioural flexibility, interaction management, identity maintenance, uncertainty reduction strategies, appropriate display of respect, immediacy skills, ability to establish interpersonal relationships* and *expressing clarity and face support*. They allow for adaptive, flexible, and supportive communication.



INTERCULTURAL APPROACH IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Therefore, it is posited that the intercultural dimension in language teaching is aimed at developing learners as intercultural speakers, or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. It is based on perceiving the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than a representative of an external identity. The intercultural dimension is concerned with: 1) helping learners to understand how intercultural interaction takes place; 2) how social identities are part of all interaction; 3) how their perceptions of other people and other people's perceptions of them influence the success of communication; and 4) how they can find out for themselves more about the people they are communicating with.

Intercultural training in language education requires the application of three different approaches: experiential learning, an ethnographic approach and a comparative approach, which will be discussed in the forthcoming parts of the present chapter.

❖ ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

The term ethnography is very broad and it focuses on research that involves immersion within, and investigation of, a culture or social world. What we do is we enter a particular culture and draw upon a variety of methods in order to understand and interpret various cultural meanings. Ethnography can be conceived as a methodological persuasion, or a guiding approach to research, in which the researcher attends to the rich generation of meanings by social actors, as a consequence of various structures and decisions made by individuals. *This approach denotes moving from description to explanation*, because as B. Malinowski argued the role of ethnographer was '*to attempt to grasp the native's point of view, their relation to life and to realize their vision of their world'*. Hence, it means getting to know people by being there, alongside them, during ordinary days, to try to capture their experiences at first hand.

Ethnographic research can be embraced as a methodology that aims to look again at the cultures we may feel we already know so well. In this sense, ethnography is about turning a critical eye onto practices, dynamics, policies and meaning making within familiar cultures. It means turning social contexts into research contexts: the latter associated inevitably with the researcher examining the social context anew through the perspective of a critical inquirer. When researchers become part of the cultures that they describe, then researchers and participants interact together to produce the data .

Ethnography in language learning basically concentrates on observation and description of behaviours among representatives of a particular culture. From the point of view of ELT the most interesting aspect to be investigated refers to human communication. John Corbett points out that a communicated meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed by the participants of an interaction embedded within a context. It does not depend on the intentions communicated by a speaker.

Louise Damen suggested the role of ethnographic methods in foreign-language teaching. The supporters of the intercultural approach are positive about the possibility of using ethnography in integrated culture and language teaching and developing mediating competences. A learner who is showing ethnographic skills can:

- *use their own experiences;*
- *observe culture phenomena;*
- *be a participant-observer of their own and the other's culture;*
- *question in order to obtain information about culture;*
- *search for the most useful sources of information;*
- *take notes during field trips;*
- *collect, analyze, present, evaluate and distinguish qualitative from quantitative data.*

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning is an educational orientation which aims at integrating theoretical and practical elements of learning for a whole-person approach, emphasising the significance of experience for learning. The approach is well-known in various settings of informal learning, such as internships in business and service organisations, work and study assignments, clinical experience, international exchange and volunteer programmes, etc. However, the principles and practices can be used both in formal learning (institutional) contexts and in informal learning.

Experiential learning techniques include a rich variety of interactive practices whereby the participants have opportunities to learn from their own and each other's experiences, being actively and personally engaged in the process:

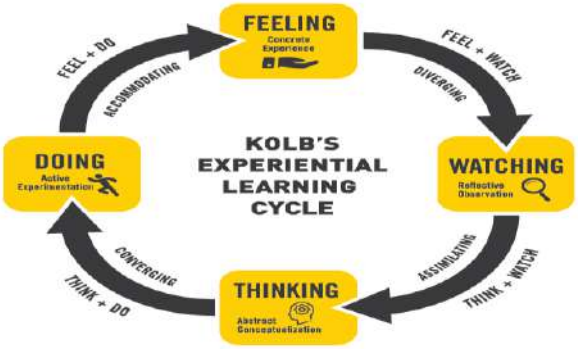
- *personal journals, diaries,*
- *portfolios,*
- *reflective personal essays and thought questions,*
- *role plays, drama activities,*
- *games and simulations,*
- *personal stories and case studies,*
- *imaginative activities,*
- *models, analogies,*

All of these contain a common element of learning from immediate experience by engaging the learners in the process as whole persons, both intellectually and emotionally. Experiential learning involves observing the phenomenon and doing something meaningful with it through active participation. It emphasises learning in which the learner *is directly in touch with the phenomenon being studied*, rather than just watching it or reading, hearing or thinking about it.

According to Woolfe J. *experiential learning* consists of the following four components:

- The student is aware of the processes which are taking place, and which are enabling learning to occur.
- The student is involved in a reflective experience which enables him/ her to relate current learning to past, present and future, even if these relationships are felt rather than thought.
- The experience and content are personally significant: what is being learned and how it is being learned have a special importance for the person.
- There is an involvement of the whole self: body, thoughts, feelings and actions, not just of the mind; in other words, the student is engaged as a whole person.

In experiential learning, immediate personal experience is the focal point for learning. As pointed out by David Kolb, personal experience gives the life, texture, and subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts. At the same time it also provides a concrete, publicly shared reference point for testing the implications and validity of ideas created during the learning process. Experience alone is not, however, a sufficient condition for learning. Experiences also need to be processed consciously by reflecting on them.



Experiential learning is a cyclical process that integrates immediate experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization and action. As Leo van Lier points out, learning something requires that one notices it in the first place: “This noticing is an awareness of its existence, obtained and enhanced by paying attention to it. Paying attention is focusing one’s consciousness, or pointing one’s perceptual powers in the right direction, and making mental ‘energy’ available for processing”. To learn something, one has to notice it and be motivated to do something about it through a conscious effort. Experiential learning thus consists of a four-stage cycle combining all of these orientations.

Experience gives food for reflective thinking, which in turn leads to abstract conceptualisations and hypotheses to be tried out through active experimentation. Practical action, in turn, yields concrete experiential material for reflection. I wish to argue further that theoretical concepts will become part of the individual's frame of reference only after s/he has experienced them meaningfully at an emotional level. Reflection plays an important role in this process by providing a bridge, as if it were, between experience and theoretical conceptualisation.

- concrete experience, learning by intuition, with an emphasis on personal experiences, belonging and feeling. The instructional activities that support this aspect include small group discussions, simulation and drama techniques, and the use of videos, films, examples and stories.
- reflective observation, learning by perception, focuses on understanding the ideas and situations by careful observation. The learner is concerned with how things happen by attempting to see them from different perspectives and relying on one’s thoughts, feelings and judgment. The instructional techniques include personal journals, reflective essays, observation reports, thought questions and discussions.
- abstract conceptualization, learning by rigorous thinking, using a systematic approach in order to structure and frame the phenomena. Emphasis is placed on the definition and classification of abstract ideas and concepts, aiming at precise conceptual categories. The instructional techniques include theory construction, lecturing and building models and analogies.
- active experimentation, learning by action, emphasizes practical applications in real work/life contexts. The learner attempts to influence people and change situations as necessary, taking risks in order to get things done. The instructional techniques include fieldwork, various projects, laboratory work, games, dramatizations and simulations. (Kolb,Kohonen)

❖ COMPARATIVE APPROACH

A. Pulverness claims that learning about the other's culture provokes comparisons with our own culture. Thus, we tend to understand and compare new phenomena with the application of categories employed by our language and culture community. The *comparative approach should be applied in teaching only with the presence of a teacher* who will be responsible for preserving an objective glance at the new phenomena so as not to falsify the newly-learnt reality. It is extremely crucial to be able to adjust an unknown or foreign element to the vision of the world we are familiar with in a very careful way. Unfortunately, *comparing two cultures does not necessarily lead to the development of intercultural awareness and empathy*.

Michael Byram and Genevieve Zarate insist on idea that only critical cultural awareness achieved through the critical analysis of cultural phenomena and their deconstruction contributes to general education and development among learners. Constant comparative analysis remains undoubtedly an essential element of action conducted by intercultural mediators. The comparative approach in teaching culture helps:

- learners to reflect on how their own language, linguistic and cultural identity are perceived by other;
- to analyze stereotypes and distinguish individual traits;
- discussion of tolerance, xenophobia, acculturation and sustaining one's identity;
- activate previously gained knowledge and experience;
- distance oneself from one's own cultural norms;
- shape one's curiosity and critical attitude instead of developing prejudices.

By emphasizing the role of the comparative approach in intercultural training, Claire Kramsch recommends various tasks, which require accepting worldviews different from one's own. One of the tasks, referred to as personal constructs, requires of learners that they make constant comparisons of ways meanings are construed by themselves and other representatives of culture. This philosophy proves that even within the same language and/or culture group, similarities and differences in the perception of a particular phenomenon can vary greatly. Analyzing things from a different perspective will allow learners to compare those aspects of their culture, which they are unaware of, although, on the other hand, they might seem obvious. To fulfill the expectations of the comparative approach, they need to engage the knowledge and experience that is indispensable for making comparisons. As a result students will be able to strengthen their cultural identity.



8. TECHNIQUES FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

In order to help their students acquire intercultural skills in more active and authentic ways language teachers are to implement a group of techniques such as: simulation games, case studies, critical incidents, role plays and culture assimilators within their lessons. and authentic ways. Their value consists in enabling the students to experience, although in the classroom, the challenges, pitfalls, opportunities and rewards of intercultural communication as they engage their participants intellectually, emotionally and also somatically in the interactions. Since the techniques differ in their impact on the development of intercultural communicative competence, they should be combined together and carefully tailored to their participants' actual knowledge, skills and needs.

SIMULATION GAMES have proven to be an extremely valuable technique for foreign-language learning as they prepare learners for a successful participation in intercultural communication. They encourage thinking and creativity, help students develop and practice new language and behavioural skills in a relatively non-threatening setting, and create the motivation and involvement necessary for learning to occur. The use of simulation games as training tools is not new but its significant growth has been experienced in their development and use since the 1990s.

For Jack Richards and Theodore Rodgers *simulation* is a very effective means to create learners' cultural awareness and to make them earn the value of culture in interpersonal communication so as to relate better to others and to fulfill social transactions more efficiently. They evaluate it by examining its impact on realizing three functions of language n interpersonal encounters: structural, functional and interactional. The simulation method follows from the interactional view which sees the language as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals. Language teaching content, according to this view, may be specified and organized by patterns of exchange and interaction or may be left unspecified, to be shaped by the inclinations of learners as interactors.

In Ken Jones' approach, in turn, the stress is put on the duties and obligations of the parties involved in a simulation game. To fulfill their roles, students must relate to others by means of

> *"THE TEACHER BECOMES THE CONTROLLER, AND CONTROLS THE EVENT IN THE SAME WAY AS A TRAFFIC CONTROLLER, HELPING THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC, BUT NOT TELLING INDIVIDUALS WHICH WAY TO GO".* **K. JONES**

effective social skills which means that simulation teaches co-operation and social skills, the same as in a real communication context. Its pragmatic value derives also from the communicators' ability to negotiate their behaviours in response to any change within the interaction. Jones specifies the conditions under which simulation is effective. He claims that for a simulation to occur the participants must accept the duties and responsibilities of their roles and functions, and do the best they can in the situation in which they find themselves .

The simulation technique should be integrated with other language-learning activities and adapted to students' needs and to their language level. If these guidelines are followed, it can be a rewarding experience for both the students and the teacher. As simulation games serve as excellent communicative activities, they can be a powerful language-learning tool. On the surface, the aim of all language games is to get the students to use a foreign language; but their true reason is to make them use the target language for specific purposes, e.g. to persuade and negotiate their way to obtain desired results, which involves productive and receptive skills simultaneously.

Another strong point of simulation games which build upon the knowledge and skill of their participants is an ability to teach social values, such as competition, co-operation, sense of community and empathy. Participants see clearly that they must co-operate and also be responsible for their decisions in order to play and win. They experience the way their decisions influence not only their own future but also of the whole team they belong to, offering them opportunities for self-awareness. Simulation games allow participants to recognize their personal responsibility in dealing constructively and effectively with the environment. They can also increase their knowledge of specific terms, concepts, and facts as well as of structures and relationships, they help them develop intellectual and social skills and attitudes by simulating them in the games. Encouraging questions that help make sense of social systems in a global context and experimenting with new ideas and behaviours are the strengths of simulation games.

The number of simulation games is continually growing due to their value in the teaching-learning process. *Bafa Bafa* belongs to their first generation, other such as *Tag Game, The Land of the Sphinx* and *Land of the Rainbow, Parle* follow the same basic principle to make their participants experience intercultural communication and thus be able to understand it as well as their own reaction in the new setting.

All simulation games are an invaluable aid in developing intercultural communicative competence. Although, they are just games, students tend to behave in a similar or even identical way as they do in reality. They solve their problems, judge actions of other group members, and react emotionally towards their defeats and successes.

THE CASE-STUDY TECHNIQUE has its modern roots in the use of court records. The use of case studies in intercultural training in preparing the learner for interaction with cultures other than his/her own is also connected with anthropological research. The components of a typical case study are the case itself, which may include separate descriptions of perspectives of different characters, followed by a set of questions. The questions are to be discussed in groups with an instructor in the role of a facilitator. Cases may also include supporting documents, such as readings, memoranda, organizational procedures, reports, even films or videos. Case studies can be used in the beginning,

middle, or end of the teaching programme. The decision whether or not to use the case study technique in intercultural training depends on three basic factors:

- ✓ the purpose of the case study in the course design and the learning objectives it supports,
- ✓ the level of the course participants in relation to the sophistication of the material presented, the other learning strategies to be used.

Case studies are used primarily to develop and refine cognitive skills, such as

analysis and decision making. They also bear on the following intercultural training goals and objectives: identifying and solving problems which have their roots at least in part in intercultural differences; developing alternative approaches and strategies; and making decisions which take into account different cultural perspectives and their. According to Robert Ross (1979: 142) case studies are designed as a technique for developing ways of approaching complex or stressful situations which can be practised in the safety of the classroom.

> *Case study will facilitate maximum understanding of those situations, of the people in them, and of the several outcomes that might result when one or another of the people emphasizes certain values rather than others. Furthermore, the case studies afford the student an opportunity to practice this method of tackling problems before he is personally involved in situations that he may find confusing, frightening, or overwhelming*. **Robert Ross**

Case studies may be additionally used to develop awareness and appreciation of cultural differences and of the complexity of the types of situations participants are likely to encounter in inter- and intra-cultural settings abroad and in their own country. They also facilitate development and practising of skills in group dynamics, such as consensus building, managing discussions, influencing others to accept a certain point of view, and dealing with interactions in a multicultural group. Finally, they serve to develop information-collecting skills called forth in exploring the human and material resources. The case study should be used in tandem

with more interactive techniques to increase its effectiveness. For example, some trainers present and discuss a case study and then have the participants act it out as a role play.

Apart from unquestionable advantages it offers, the case study technique is constrained by a number of factors:

- ✓ its proper application in view of the needs of a particular audience in the training programme is very time-consuming as it can take from an hour to half a day depending on how elaborate it is and how much information has to be collected for its construction:

- ✓ the method is most effectively used when there is a minimum of 15 to 20 participants and a maximum of 40 to 60 participants, which is not always possible;
- ✓ it requires a special classroom arrangement to allow the participants to interact with each other and also with the trainer;
- ✓ it is an experiential-learning technique, it demands from its users some openness and willingness to adopt the format.

As for advantages of the case study:

- ✓ it is one of the safest experiential-learning techniques because, among others, the participant does not have to perform in front of the whole group but does have the opportunity to speak in small groups:
- ✓ the problem-solving approach it uses draws on the knowledge and experience of the group, which results in a natural way of sharing knowledge and information and promotes peer learning;
- ✓ it reflects the actual complexities of intercultural interaction by showing that they are rarely as simple as they seem;
- ✓ it encourages participants to question the notion that there is one right way or one correct answer to the problem,
- ✓ helps them learn to weigh carefully the many factors which affect intercultural interaction.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS are brief descriptions of situations which cause a misunderstanding, a problem or a conflict due to cultural differences between interacting parties. They may also deal with difficulties of intercultural adaptation. Each incident gives only enough information to set the stage, describe what happened, and possibly provide the feelings and reactions of the parties involved. It does not explain the culture that the parties bring to the situation as it has to be discovered in the course of the exercise. It is highly unlikely to use only one incident in training as its effectiveness will be low. CIE usually consists of a number of incidents, dealing with different situations and revealing different aspects of their underlying culture.

The basic purpose of the CIE is to confront participants with examples of the difficult, confusing and frustrating problems or conflict situations they may experience in interpersonal encounters across cultures or when adjusting to a new culture. Therefore, the incident should identify the main actors. The objectives of the exercise are:

- ✓ to increase participants' awareness of their own typical, idiosyncratic, and culturally determined interpretations and explanations of others' behaviour as well as of their own attitudes and responses in new situations by means of critical comparisons;
- ✓ to clarify the cultural differences in their interpretation of the incidents, which should lead to an increase in their understanding of cultural diversity and normative differences between the cultures;
- ✓ they should become more aware of things they need to learn to have their goals met, which should motivate their learning;
- ✓ CIE may provide a basis for engaging in role plays that will build skills.

CIEs have their own structure and procedures which have to be observed for their effectiveness:

- at the beginning, participants are asked to work individually on the incidents and send the assignment to the instructor in advance or introduce it when they arrive for the training programme;
- a brief written or verbal introduction and overview of the exercise, is followed by the participants reading the incidents and answering the questions.
- the second part of the exercise is devoted to small-group discussions. Its handling depends on the number of participants, availability of resource persons, and the instructor's decision to participate in it or not;
- discussions are more effective in a group that has a sufficient number of participants to provide a variety of views and opinions but small enough to allow each person to participate actively;
- the best results are achieved with no fewer than five or six persons and not more than eight or nine, not counting resource persons. With more than nine persons, it is better to break into two small groups, unless the number of resource persons is insufficient;
- the resource person or the trainer is encouraged not to take part in the group discussions as this might inhibit open participation. With written instructions given to the group and reinforced orally, participants are fully capable of managing and monitoring their own discussion;
- finally, the groups will be asked to share the results of their discussions with the other groups in a general meeting;
- who represents them in the large group is a decision that should be left up to them. They might even choose to have more than one spokesperson. handling problematic intercultural situations.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS ALLOW THE TRAINEES TO EXAMINE MANY OF THE ISSUES IN THE SAFETY OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME AND, ONE WOULD HOPE, HELP THEM AVOID MAKING MISTAKES IN REAL LIFE.

A ROLE PLAY is a training activity where at least two participants take on characteristics of people other than themselves in order to attain a clearly defined objective. Their roles are usually fictitious, although they must be completely believable in the eyes of the trainees for the role play to work. If they are not actively involved in the role play, they function as observers. Although a role-play session may run up to an hour, which includes preparation and debriefing, the actual role play runs from five to seven minutes. The most appropriate use of role

plays is to build skills. Therefore, role plays should be used in training programs that are aimed at building interpersonal skills, such as a management-training course that includes sessions on delegating, negotiating, managing conflict, giving and receiving feedback, and so on. In addition to skill development, there are other reasons for using role plays:

- ✓ creating attitudinal change (asking a manager to play the role of a secretary);
- ✓ generating a sense of empathy for a person from another culture;
- ✓ skill building;

✓ acting and experiencing, which allows the students for an active use of the theoretical knowledge they have acquired.

A role play should never be conducted by itself; it should be done as part of a larger session that has a beginning, some clear training goals, established and well-developed training procedures, and an ending. The role, usually written on a card may sometimes be new for the student-actor, which enhances the challenge of performing it, e.g. the pre-departure training for people going to live and work in another culture.

Hence, the role play becomes practice for a future experience that can be

predicted and for which there should be preparation. A well-written role play, which is a prerequisite for its didactic success, must be:

- clear, concise and open-ended;
- have some element of dynamic tension;
- be interesting to participants;
- use language from their everyday work or social settings;
- it must also follow a certain procedure;
- a role play should share the goals and rationale of the students who should understand its purpose and its value for their future activities;
- the linkage between the purpose of the role play and the reason for the group getting engaged in the training should be clear for every participant as otherwise they may fail to see their benefits;
- sometimes a role-play session is reinforced by an actual model, in person or on a videotape;
- at other times, the model may be a description of a certain skill or approach to an interpersonal situation, which facilitates the participants' sharing the situation, characters (roles), and details of the role-play;
- the protagonist role must be allocated to one of the participants as they will identify with and practice it.

THE ROLE OF THE INSTRUCTOR CONSISTS IN REINFORCING THE GOALS AND ALLOWING PARTICIPANTS TO PRACTISE SKILLS IN A COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE WHICH SHOWS HIS/HER OPENNESS WITH PARTICIPANTS, ENGAGEMENT AND EXPERTISE.

THE CULTURE ASSIMILATOR (also called intercultural sensitizer) is another popular technique of intercultural training. It uses a series of scenarios that involve some elements of culture clash or misunderstanding to prepare people for interacting effectively with culturally different others. A participant is asked to read a scenario and then select the best explanation for the incident under discussion. A feedback on the appropriateness of the choice is then received. Paige claims that the reasoning behind a culture assimilator is that through repeated exposure to

a situation or a scenario, the trainee will learn to make attributions similar to those made by members of the culture involved.

Fred E. Fiedler, Terence R. Mitchell and Harry C. Triandis claim that the development of an effective culture assimilator is a rather complex process. First of all, there is no single and universal culture assimilator as different activities are needed for different pairs of cultures. It is due to the fact that the activity has a form of programmed learning experience designed to expose members of one culture to some of the basic concepts, attitudes, role perceptions, customs and values of another culture. Furthermore, assimilators can be general or specific; hence they culture. Furthermore, assimilators can be general or specific; hence they may train an individual to behave effectively in a narrow set of social situations, or in a broad group of social situations. The content of assimilators can also vary greatly:

- some assimilators emphasize the interpersonal attitudes that contrast the learner's culture and the target culture;
- other assimilators focus on the customs of the target culture,
- others concentrate on the value contrasts of two cultures.

On some occasions it is hard to estimate which type of assimilator is maximally useful in a particular situation. It might seem obvious to postulate that a balanced assimilator containing an equal number of general and specific items, and concerned with each of the aforementioned areas of content does improve interpersonal interaction in multicultural settings. A skillfully constructed culture assimilator should be regarded as a useful technique for the instruction of members of one culture to behave effectively in social and task situations involving members of another culture. Three particular strengths of this approach are:

- ✓ the training depends on a detailed analysis of empirically derived critical cultural information;
- ✓ it provides an active training procedure;
- ✓ it improves the effectiveness and satisfaction of those trained with the technique when they are compared with another group prepared by means of another activity



ACTIVITY 1

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• TOLERANCE • EMPATHY • MULTI-PERSPECTIVITY	- To understand the concept of value and of cultural identity - To understand the link between values and culture - To understand the influence of our culture on our behaviors and our points of view.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Explain to the participants that this exercise is about examining different values; give a copy of the following story to each pupil and ask them to read the story:

TEXT**: MARY**

"Mary loves Tom who lives on the other side of the river. A flood has destroyed all bridges across the river, and has left only one boat afloat. Mary asks Sinbad, the owner of the boat, to bring her to the other side. Sinbad agrees on the condition that Mary has to spend the night with him first. Mary, not knowing what to do, runs to her mother and asks her for advice, who tells her that she does not want to interfere with Mary's own business. In her desperation Mary sleeps with Sinbad, who in return brings her across the river. Mary runs to find Tom, she hugs him gleefully and tells him everything that has happened. Tom bluntly pushes her away and Mary runs away. Not far from Tom's house, Mary meets John, Tom's best friend. She shares the story with him as well. John hits Tom for what he has done to Mary and walks away with her."

2. Read the story by him/herself and to rank the character (Mary, Tom, Sinbad, Mary's mother, John) according to their behavior: who acted worst? Who second worst?
3. Evaluate individually each character based on their behaviour (Mary, Tom, Sinbad, Mary's mother and John)

N.B

In order to get the best results from the exercise, it is essential that you establish an *open atmosphere* in which every ranking of the story is okay and where you do not start "*blaming*" people for arguments you might consider strange or bad yourself.

ACTIVITY 2

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- VALUING/RESPECT OF OTHER HUMAN BEING
- VALUING/RESPECT FOR CULTURAL DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY
- VALUING/RESPECT FOR OTHER CULTURES/CULTURAL OTHERNESS
- TOLERANCE
- CRITICAL THINKING
- SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE
- INTERCULTURAL BEHAVIOR

– knowledge and understanding of other cultures

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To learn about different belief systems and religions
- To develop critical thinking
- To cultivate acceptance of diversity of beliefs and religions

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Explain that in this activity they will be discussing their beliefs; some people may be deeply religious, others less so and some may have no religion.

2. Make it very clear to participants that they need to be aware of what they say and how they express themselves. The protection of religious beliefs, as well as religious symbols from insult and denigration, falls within the scope of freedom of religion.

3. Divide participants into small groups of between 4-6 people and ask them to reflect individually for 3 or 4 minutes on their personal beliefs. For example, if they have a religion, how closely do they observe the creeds and rituals?

4.Now place the cards face down in the middle of the group. Tell the participants that they should keep their discussions short so that they can get through as many cards as possible. That way they will get a broad perspective on the issues; they can follow up topics that are of particular interest later.

5. Explain that in each round a participant takes a card, reads it out aloud and then comments on the statement. Then the others have the opportunity to contribute with an example from their own religion or experience.

6. When all the cards have been discussed or the time is up, move on to debrief.

DEBRIEFING

- Were there any facts, beliefs or attitudes towards your own life stance that surprised you?
- What did people have in common despite their different life stances?
- What fundamental differences were there between people's life stances? Are they irreconcilable?
- Why is it important to know about other people's life stances? How ignorant are you? Should you know more about them?
- Bearing in mind that freedom of religion and belief is a human right, how easy is it to respect people when you fundamentally disagree with their life stance?
- To what extent do ignorance and prejudice about different life stances play a role in peoples' perceptions of each other?
- Does everyone have freedom of belief and religion in your country? Why, why not?
- What form do violations of freedom of belief and religion take in your country?
- To what extent should freedom of thought, conscience and religion allow for distinctive practices within the community of believers that may diverge from wider society?

ACTIVITY 3

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- TOLERANCE
- EMPATHY AND DECENTRING
- SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of value and to reflect on it
- To learn to listen to other's perspectives, to set out arguments and to negotiate.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Prepare the value-cards containing *values*, deeply rooted beliefs about what is good and what is bad. Also, try to ensure that each value you note down could be actively supported by at least one of the participants.
2. Randomly hand out the value cards to the participants, and make sure everybody receives 8 cards.
3. Ask participants to "upgrade" the cards through trading – that is, exchange values they have on their cards with values they prefer. There is no obligation to trade 1:1, the only rule is that nobody should end up with less than 2 cards.
4. Once trading has stopped, ask participants to get together in groups holding similar value-cards. They should discuss what it is they have in common. If you like, you could also ask them to focus on where these values came from and why they hold similar values.
5. Then ask them to find somebody that holds values that are very different than theirs. These pairs should try to formulate values they can both agree on, on the basis of what they have on their cards. Although participants might be tempted to simply find compromises by finding more and more abstract and meaningless statements, motivate them to stay as concrete as possible.

DEBRIEFING

- How did you feel about the exercise? Was it easy to trade values? What made it easy/difficult?
- Did you find out something about your own values – and where they come from?
- How was it to compromise on their values? What made it particularly difficult? How can you compromise on values?
- Values are very often seen as at the foundation of "culture", and they are so deeply rooted that most people find it difficult to negotiate about them. How can we really live together interculturally then? Are there some common values everybody can agree on?
- How do you live together if you cannot agree on values? What kind of "working arrangements" could you make?

ACTIVITY 4

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- AWARENESS OF THE INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY
- SKILLS OF OBSERVATION, IMAGINATION AND CRITICAL THINKING
- SOLIDARITY AND RESPECT FOR OTHER HUMAN BEINGS.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- valuing/respect of other human beings
- valuing/respect for cultural difference and diversity
- tolerance
- empathy and decentring
- flexibility and adaptability
- communicative awareness
- critical thinking
- multi-perspectivity
- skills of listening and observing

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. With the group, brainstorm those people who are disadvantaged or living at the margin of society or who have a different culture from them. (e.g. children, a pensioner, an immigrant, a person in a wheelchair or someone with HIV/AIDS, a homeless person, an illegal immigrant, an illiterate person, a mentally ill person or a member of the Roma community.

2. Ask each participant to choose one such person whom they are curious about and explain that they are going to go out and explore the locality through that person's eyes.

3. Emphasise that the point is not to act out the role, but to go out and imagine what it would be like to be the other person. What would it be like to be in that person's shoes? For instance, would they be able to enjoy all the amenities? Where would they buy bread (if they can afford it)? Where would they live? Would they identify with advertising posters in the street?

4. On their return, ask each participant to transfer their pictures onto the computer, then to choose two, three or four to print out, mount on a large piece of paper and tape onto the wall. The pictures should be untitled.

5. When all the pictures are displayed, ask everyone to try to guess which groups are being represented; then invite each participant in turn to present their pictures and to explain why they are particularly interested in the particular group they chose to "see". Begin by looking at the exhibition and then go on to ask participants in turn what they experienced and what they saw:

DEBRIEFING

- What happened? Did you enjoy the activity? Why? Why not?
- What was the most surprising thing you discovered?
- Why did you choose the example you did?
- What preconceived ideas or stereotypes did you have about the person you chose?
- What influence did these have on how you did the activity and what you "chose to see"?
- Did the exercise enable you to empathise in any way with the person at the margin? Why? Why not?
- What have you learnt about yourself?

ACTIVITY 5

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE
- KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER CULTURES
- INTERCULTURAL BEHAVIOR

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- to introduce a discussion about different ways of conduct in different cultures
- to think of our reaction to cultural differences

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Participants are asked to imagine the following situation: Newly arrived at the airport, everyone is trying to find their host. As we are in a multicultural society, the greeting rituals can be very different.
2. Everyone receives an instruction card with the greeting ceremony they must observe. The group is divided, according to its size, into hosts and guests; one host can have more than one guest.
3. Everyone, while behaving according to the ritual prescribed on their cards, must find the person(s) associated with them, who is/are part of the same culture. It is not allowed to use words.

DEBRIEFING

Which greeting rituals made you feel (un)comfortable? Why?

Were there any greetings that were misunderstood (e.g. as hostile approaches or advances)?

What feelings did unfamiliar forms of greeting engender? How would the participants have liked to react in some cases?

How should we react when faced with different customs? Which rules should apply

ACTIVITY 6

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- TOLERANCE
- EMPATHY AND DE-CENTRING
- SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE
- COMMUNICATIVE AWARENESS
- MULTI-PERSPECTIVITY
- SKILLS OF LISTENING AND OBSERVING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To express motivations, wishes and dreams
- To turn personal and abstract motivations, wishes and dreams into concrete actions
- To build a programme that takes into account everybody's motivations

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Give each student a travel plan sheet and ask each of them to fill it in order to create "the ideal trip to them" (20 minutes). Each student will need to select a country with a substantial different culture. Each student need to plan: accommodation (what kind? where?); transportation (which vehicle? How many km per day?); different stops, visits etc.; describe the culture in the country of choice.

2 In small groups (4 or 5 students maximum), ask each student to share their travel plan. (10 minutes)

3 Gather the whole group together. The objective is now to create the "Great Travel Plan", 1 travel plan1 travel plan in which everybody can identify and find part of his/her wishes and motivations. (20 minutes) Facilitate the debate between the students: accommodation: some choose hotels, other family hosting etc. What is behind the preferences? How to find a solution that works for everybody cultures: how do cultures differ and is it an important aspect when choosing a country.

4. When the group has finished to create the "Great Travel Plan" through consensus, initiate a talk with the group (10 minutes).

- Are you happy with the result of this plan? Why?
- Was it hard to find a common travel plan that everybody could identify with? Why?
- Can you describe the differences in culture from the different countries and how did this effect the final common travel plan.

N.B

The activity raises awareness about the gap, sometimes considerable, between the personal motivations of each member of the group. You should point out that various motivations can lead to very different planning choices. Moreover, they are not always compatible in terms of on-site planning. It is important then to think as a group.

ACTIVITY 7

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE
- EMPATHY AND DECENTRING
- KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER CULTURES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- to raise curiosity and empathy about the other participants' cultures
- to generate a critical approach to our own history
- to create awareness of the diversity of the world history.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Ask each pupil to think about 3 "public" events that have marked their lives and then ask them to write their name against the year in which the events occurred. The events may be related to politics, history, sports, music etc.
2. Then ask the pupils to say why those dates are important, what they stand for and why they have chosen them. Invite the pupils to say if they were surprised or shocked by any of the dates or events and whether were they familiar with all of them. It also may be interesting to discuss why we attach importance to some events rather than to others.

N.B

If you are working with a local group, this activity helps participants realize that, even though they may live in the same street, people often attach different degrees of importance to the same events. It may also be interesting to notice that some particular event has marked a majority of the participants regardless of their origin or educational background – we are "all equal".

ACTIVITY 8

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- VALUING/RESPECT OF OTHER HUMAN BEINGS
- VALUING/RESPECT FOR CULTURAL DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY
- VALUING/RESPECT FOR OTHER CULTURES/CULTURAL OTHERNESS
- TOLERANCE
- EMPATHY AND DECENTRING
- SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE
- COMMUNICATIVE AWARENESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To deepen understanding about cultural differences and institutional racism
- To develop skills for democratic participation, communication and co-operation
- To promote responsibility, justice and solidarity

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Begin the activity with a brainstorm on "racism". Go on to brainstorm what kinds of everyday incidents and behaviour people identify as being racist.

Racism, in general terms, consists of conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.

2. Ask for four volunteers to act out the role play. Give them the role cards and copies of the critical incident and give them 15 minutes to prepare.

1. Explain that everyone else is an observer. Hand out paper and pens and explain that they will be watching three short scenes. There will be short breaks in between for the observers to write down key words which summarise their response.
2. Ask the volunteers to act out the role play.
3. At the end, conduct a short debriefing of people's comments:

a. What did people write down in the first break? What led participants to their conclusions?

b. What did people write down in the second break? What led them to those conclusions?

c. What did people realize at the end? What assumptions had they been making?

DEBRIEFING

- How prevalent is racism in your school and in society at large?
- Do you know of any racist incidents that have happened in your school or community?
- Are any groups targeted more often than others? Which? Why? Were the same groups targeted twenty or fifty years ago?
- How are Roma treated in your country and in other countries in Europe?
- What sorts of stereotypes do you have of Roma people? Where do these stereotypes come from? How can they be challenged?
- Which human rights are at stake in the critical incident?
- Have the participants' ideas of what constitutes a racist incident changed as a result of doing the activity? How? Elicit examples.
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure that racist incidents do not happen in your school or organisation?
- Having a policy on dealing with racist incidents is important, but would it not be better not to need it in the first place? What can and should be done to address the causes of racist behaviour, both in school and in society at large?

ACTIVITY 9

INTERCULTURALCOMPETENCES

- KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE IN GENERAL
- KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER CULTURES
- VALUING / RESPECT FOR CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND DIVERSITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of culture
- To become aware of one's own culture and recognize its influence on one's behaviour and attitude
- To learn and understand about the institutions, customs, traditions, practices and current issues in a specific country
- To be able to discuss cultures without stereotyping or making judgmental statements.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to bring an object or picture that represent their culture and have each one explain how they think it represents their culture.

2. Draw the image of an iceberg on a flipchart and place it on a table. Add all the objects or pictures on the tip above the water. Explain the iceberg model of culture : what is easily visible only represents 10% of the culture.

3. Ask the students to relocate the different features of culture that are listed (appendix), either below or above the waterline.

When meeting another culture, we tend to interpret the behaviour observed with our own iceberg, our own set of values and beliefs, which may be the cause for culture shock. It is important to keep in mind that the behaviour demonstrated is rooted in values that are not clearly visible.

4. Facilitate the discussion on the relationship between the visible and invisible aspects of culture. Facilitate a discussion to figure out how the objects brought represent the values and beliefs that are not visible (the 90% part of the iceberg) and write them in the iceberg below water (or link them together if some have already been mentioned in the list).

ACTIVITY 10

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- VALUING/RESPECT OF OTHER HUMAN BEINGS
- CRITICAL THINKING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- to understand what Trafficking is and define its types
- to be able to differentiate "Trafficking" from other similar phenomena
- to raise awareness about Trafficking and the importance of its prevention.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Present 2 statements on a board and suggest the students to express their own ideas (agree – disagree):

- People should immigrate for better living conditions and welfare.

- Trafficking has no connection with the Human rights issue.

Discuss statements with students.

2. Ask students to make a brief research on the internet in order to find the relevant websites (mentioned in the resources of this activity) to identify strategies for combating with trafficking and prevention of discrimination.
3. After this, distribute the handouts – "Mary's Story" and ask the students:
    - to have the list of events in chronological order,
    - to underline the sentences containing abuse of the Human rights,
    - to determine the type of the trafficking.
4. Students should encourage others to share their stories. One representative from each group will present one similar story (chosen by the group) to the whole class audience.

DEBRIEFING

1. Have you, or someone you care about, ever been discriminated against? If so, what happened?
2. Did anyone help? If so, how? If not, what would you have wanted someone to do?
3. Is it easy or difficult to speak up when your friends are discriminating against someone and you are present? Why?
4. What would you support in standing up against discrimination?

ACTIVITY 11

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

- VALUING/RESPECT OF OTHER HUMAN BEINGS
- VALUING/RESPECT FOR CULTURAL DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY
- VALUING/RESPECT FOR OTHER CULTURES/CULTURAL OTHERNESS
- CRITICAL THINKING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- to define stereotypes and prejudice and understand the connection between them
- to state harmful outcomes of stereotypes and prejudice
- to be able to give examples of a stereotype and identify those illustrated by other students.

D E B R I E F

1. *Comment: "I know I'm not seeing things as they are, I'm seeing things as I am.*", Laurel Lee said.

What effect do our stereotypes and beliefs have on the way we see the world around us?

How risky is it to make assumptions about someone based on a generalisation about the groups as a whole?

How risky is it to make generalisations about a group of people based on one or two examples?

ACTIVITY 12

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Reviewing existing definitions of communication
- Sharing experiences with communication methods
- Deeper understanding of the other's point of view

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Brainstorming session on definition of communication: each participant choose one word which comes to their mind when they hear "communication".
2. Facilitator should note the words down on a flipchart paper. Timing: 10 min.
3. Participants should split into small groups and create a common definition with using the words or meaning of the words they associated. Afterwards, groups should present their definitions to others. Timing: 20 min.
4. Each group should be provided with a handout containing definitions of communication (see below). They have to decide which definition fits best with their own definition. It should be a common decision. Timing: 20 min.

1. *Communication is an interaction between people, containing an exchange of information and knowledge in order to creat a network through dialogue.*
2. *Communication is an interaction between people who take part in the process of talking, listening and mutual understanding.*
3. *Communication is brightening the way to express perception of the heart through speaking, listening, writing and feeling*
4. *Communication: The successful transmission of information through a common system of symbols, signs, behavior, speech, writing, or signals.*
5. *Communication is the exchange of ideas, opinions and information through written or spoken words, symbols or actions.*
6. *Communication - The ability to make understood wants and needs using verbal language, sign language, gestures, facial expression, computers, or a combination of methods.*
7. *Communication is a movement of matter or energy between two parts of the universe. This matter or energy can be a carrier of information .*

E V A L U A T E

1. What happened? Did you enjoy the activity? Why? Why not?
2. What was the most surprising thing you discovered?

3. Can one definition of communication be applied and shared by all participants? Why not?
4. Is such a common definition needed or necessary for further work?

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